

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

would be myself, were it not for the divine grace that preserves me.' "

And, a little later, we find her urging him and Frate Antonio (the hermit of Nice who, Cristofano di Gano tells us, was the Englishman's chosen companion) not to let their love of solitude draw them from their duties of obedience and charity : —

" I tell you, in the name of Christ crucified, that not only should you say Mass in the convent sometimes in the week when the prior wishes it, but I want you to say it every day, if you see that it is his wish. Because you lose your consolations, you do not lose the state of grace ; nay, rather, you acquire it, when you lose your own will. I want us (in order that we may show ourselves eaters of souls and tasters of our neighbours) not to attend only to our own consolations ; we must also care and have compassion for the labours of our neighbours, and especially for those who are united in one same bond of charity. If you did not so, it would be a very great fault. And, therefore, I wish you to be sure to listen to the troubles and needs of Frate Antonio, and I wish and pray Frate Antonio to listen to yours. And so I beseech you, in Christ's name and mine, to do. In this way you will preserve true charity in yourselves, and, otherwise, you would give room to the devil to sow discord." ²

Another early member of the spiritual family was Messer

Matteo di Fazio de' Cenni, " a notable servant of God," who,

after a dissolute youth, had been converted by the influence of

William Flete, and was now devoting himself to an active life of

charity as rector of the Casa della Misericordia, one of the chief

Sieneſe hospitals. Sano di Maco, a plebeian who had business

connections with the Benincasa family and was a person of some

influence with the artisan government, also became one of Cathe

rine's ſons in religion. An old hermit, Fra Santi da Teramo,

†f holy alike in name and in deeds," an anchorite from the Abruzzi

who had been intimately associated with Pietro
Petroni and
Giovanni Colombini, likewise joined the circle. " In
his old
age," writes Raimondo, " finding this precious pearl,
the virgin

¹ Letter 64 (124).

² Letter 77 (128).